

Sends letter with Chairman Culberson to Secretary Shinseki outlining their priorities in the 112th Congress

Washington, DC – Rep. Sanford D. Bishop (D-GA), Ranking Member of the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, today sent a letter to Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary, Erik Shinseki, outlining his priorities for improving the performance of the VA, and providing the troops, veterans and their families with the resources they deserve. Subcommittee Chairman John Culberson (R-TX) joined Rep. Bishop in sending the letter to Secretary Shinseki, as part of the subcommittee's preparation for hearings later this year.

"Our troops and their families have always gone above and beyond the call of duty, enduring great sacrifices to keep the American people safe," said Ranking Member Bishop. "We have an obligation to provide the services, support and resources our veterans and their families deserve and we must ensure that the VA carries out its mission of providing adequate care helps ease the burden of wartime service."

In the letter to Secretary Shinseki, Subcommittee Chairman Culberson and Subcommittee Ranking Member Bishop said:

"Your Department's mission is to serve America's Veterans and their families with dignity and compassion, and to be their principal advocate in ensuring that they receive the care and support they have earned through service to our country. We are committed to ensuring that Congress, on behalf of the American people, fully supports the Department of Veteran Affairs in carrying out this mission."

Ranking Member Bishop has consistently supported veterans throughout his career and has staunchly defended the federal government's obligation to provide the Veteran's Administration with the resources it needs to meet our commitment to the troops.

"As we try to find ways to improve the performance of the VA in the 112th Congress, we will look for efficiencies and eliminate redundant programs that waste taxpayer dollars," said Ranking

Ranking Member Bishop Seeks to Improve VA's Performance

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Member Bishop. "However, with our troops in harms away, we must continue to provide the combat support equipment that helps troops win on the battlefield, give their families some stability and peace of mind here at home, and deliver exceptional patient care and services for our veterans when they come home. Doing anything less would be a disgrace to their service."

The full text of the letter from Chairman Culberson and Ranking Member Bishop is below:

January 26, 2011

Honorable Erik K. Shinseki
Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As the newly-elected Chairman and Ranking Member of the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, we look forward to working with you and learning more about the operations of your Department. Your Department's mission is to serve America's Veterans and their families with dignity and compassion, and to be their principal advocate in ensuring that they receive the care and support they have earned through service to our country. We are committed to ensuring that Congress, on behalf of the American people, fully supports the Department of Veteran Affairs in carrying out this mission.

However, it is the responsibility of the Subcommittee to provide effective stewardship of scarce taxpayer dollars, and our current fiscal situation requires us to eliminate inefficiency, fraud and abuse in all of the programs that your Department oversees. Therefore, we are writing today to ask for your help in identifying for the subcommittee savings in discretionary programs that could be enacted without diminishing patient care or services. We ask that you analyze all discretionary programs, including medical care, construction, information technology, general

operating expenses, research, and the National Cemetery Administration, to look for savings and to also identify any duplicative or inefficient programs that can be eliminated or improved to provide savings for taxpayers and better health care and services for our nation's heroes.

Our hearing schedule will begin shortly after March 1st, so we would ask that you provide the results of your analysis to us and the subcommittee staff by February 21, 2011. We are deeply grateful to you for your service to our nation and for your able leadership of the Veteran's Administration.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies

John A. Culberson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies

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